

GENERATION CHANGERS AT WORK IN THE WORLD

Randa Kuziez presented a research paper entitled "The Future of Faith in Globalisation" at a conference in Sarajevo hosted by the International Institute of Islamic Thought and the Association of Muslim Social Scientists.

Kalsoom Lakhani's company, ML Social Vision, in partnership with Pakistani Peace Builders, has raised over \$135,000 for the organization's emergency first response flood relief efforts: Relief4Pakistan.

Seemi Choudry is working on the New Americans Democracy Project (NADP) at ICIRR (Illinois Coalition for Immigrant and Refugee Rights) – an integrated campaign to empower the immigrant community.

Hamza Khan is working on Project Akbar, a social media project bringing America's top college politicians together with Pakistan's emerging young political activists to talk about policy, religion, stereotypes and domestic affairs.

Adam Sitte is starting law school at the University of Chicago and writing about gender issues for Altmuslimah.

Saad Malik is creating Muslim-Startups.com – a platform to help ambitious people who love business learn from a mix of experienced mentors.

Dena Elkhatib helped the Iraqi Orphan Initiative gain momentum in Illinois and raised sponsorship for an Islamic Finance Conference in Malta this past Fall.

Amin Gharad is organizing a debate between the Young Democrats and Young Republicans of Lexington, KY. As president of Paul



Wajahat Ali's play, "The Domestic Crusaders:"

Laurence Dunbar High School's Young Democrats club, he will be the keynote democratic debater.

Ihana Alazze is working for the U.S. Immigrants Project and interfaith activities in her community, and was a guest speaker at Smith College this fall.

Filmmaker **Justin Mashouf** traveled to Pakistan this month to produce a documentary about an orphanage and school for girls.



Justin Mashouf, filming documentary in Iran. Check out one of his films: Warring Factions.

Bilal Kaleem recently assisted his company, Boston Asia Capital, to finalize a deal with the Nigerian government that will create dozens of advanced manufacturing jobs in Massachusetts while providing a clean-energy solution to Nigeria.

Haroon Moghul is leading the Maydan Institute, a consultancy that specializes in empowering Muslims and develops access to Muslim audiences and beliefs.

Nadia Naviwala's research on how USAID can better engage local NGOs and leaders in Pakistan was recently published by Harvard's Carr Center for Human Rights Policy.

Wajahat Ali's play, "The Domestic Crusaders" – one of the first major plays about Muslim Americans – was performed at the Kennedy Center and the Atlas Theatre to a full house in Washington, DC this fall. The published play was released by McSweeney's on Dec 1st.

Ali Baluch has completed his second short film and was accepted to Tribeca Flashpoint Academy.



Jibril Hirsi with Somali President sending message of peace to Somalis

Sarah Jawaid organized a Zero-Trash iftar during the month of Ramadan and is one of the lead organizers for DC Green Muslims.

Melody Moezzi is working on her second book, which deals with her experiences with bipolar disorder, physical illness, and the American mental and physical healthcare systems. She published an article on CNN.com this fall in honor of Suicide Prevention Day

Danish Kurani recently placed Top 20 in an international design competition hosted by Sucker-Punchdaily.com. You can see her proposal and more details on DanishKurani.com.



Hana Siddiqi with trophy for Best Documentary at the Luanda Film Festival for New Muslim Cool.

Kauthar Umar and **Hana Siddiqi's** film, New Muslim Cool, won Best Documentary Award for 2010 at the Luanda Film Festival in Angola. Hana Siddiqi was there to show the film and deliver a series of workshops sponsored by the American Documentary Showcase and the U.S. Embassy in Luanda. The Dutch broadcaster NTR aired New Muslim Cool in The Netherlands on December 16th.

Looking Ahead and Within: Generation Changers Express Themselves

In her poetry, Ainee Fatima raises topics discussed during the "Generation Change" event. In "Graceland," she deals with the question of identity in a surprisingly lighthearted way:



Secretary Clinton, Ainee Fatima



Read the essay: "What does a Muslim Woman Look Like?" in [The Washington Post](#) by "Generation Changer" Shazia Kamal, contributor to [Altmuslimah.com](#)

"I am not 'visibly' a Muslim female—in other words, I don't wear a hijab, the headscarf worn by some of my Muslim peers. Because people cannot instantly identify..."

Read more about Altmuslimah and their new blog at [On Faith](#).

GRACELAND: PART I

"I ain't no saint, but I have tried never to do anything that would hurt my family or offend God" ~ Elvis Presley

I shift into park, kill the engine, unbuckle my seatbelt.
I've been casing the joint for days.
The Tennessee twilight hangs in pastel orange, blue, purple.

As sweat drips down my temple, the light above the front entrance goes out.
And step out of the minivan into the Memphis evening.

I pop the trunk, grab my guitar case.
(You will breathe in deep through nose now)
The air is clean, close, and sweet.

My black burq'ha conceals me as I climb each music note on the gate and drop in.
I move unnoticed past the stone lions, and
Slide in through the window into the kitchen.

Past guitars, past gold and platinum records, past gun collections that glow beneath light
I pass it all- even the velvet rope that secures the second floor from tourists.

No one is here except me, my guitar case,
And the things of the King I came for.
Inside the double padded doors of his bedroom,

A shoulder high statue of Christ greets me.
I slide Jesus some skin and wink at him.
"Gotta date with the King, Issa."

Pleated red velvet lines the bedroom walls.
Smoked mirrors trimmed in black velvet.
I put my guitar case on the bed, next to the '68 comeback leather jacket.

I'll get that on my way out.
I stroll slowly into in his closet:

Hundreds of jumpsuits
I caress them as I pass,
Chinese Dragon, no.
Bengali Tiger, no.
Powder Blue two-piece, maybe.

The '77 Hawaii gold -studded American Eagle on white, absolutely.

I liberate myself from my Burqah and slide on the jumpsuit.
Adjust the belt, fasten the cape...the cape
I make my way back into the bedroom,
and

The drag co-efficient is Elvis awesome.
In the smoky mirror rimmed in black velvet,
arms stretched eagle wing wide

I'm a Muslim woman who must be

covered; I accept that,

But I'm also American, baby: You accept that.

Wise men say

only fools rush in

But I can't help

falling in love with you

~Ainee Fatima



The responses from "Generation Changers" were overwhelmingly positive:

"...For the first time in my life, I was surrounded by socially and politically minded Muslims who were actively facing and engaging in the same questions that I gradually became aware of in the months and years following 9/11..."

~ Mustafa Abdullah
Organizer for CHANGE (Communities Helping All Neighbors Gain Empowerment)



Anum Khan, Founder of "Spread the Peace," with SR Farah Pandith.

"...As the first such representative in our history, Farah Pandith has become a source of pride and inspiration for so many young Muslim-Americans like myself... Today, after all the smiles and handshakes and exchanges of business cards, sitting at home at the same converted dining room table, something has already changed. Joining the 74 other Generation Changers and learning about all the amazing things they're doing—both locally and globally—has given me more hope than ever that the type of change this country needs is already happening..."

~ Melody Moezzi
Author, War on Error: Real Stories of American Muslims

"Generation Change came in the perfect moment amidst all this misunderstanding about Islam and fear of what Islam can provide for its youth and American citizens. It was important that we got the opportunity to connect with other Muslims leaders and change-makers in the United States, from NASA to the fashion industry."

~ Anum Khan
Founder of "Spread the Peace"

"In light of the last nine years of panic inducing headlines obsessed with Islam which continue to hold a nightmarishly idealized version of the religion up as a composite of our views it was a relief to not be asked, 'What is your view?' or 'Why do you hate us?' but rather, 'Welcome, let's begin.'... Thank you for this gift of community..."

~ Cihan Kaan
Filmmaker and author of Halal Pork

"...a final message Rashad Hussain, Ambassador to the OIC, shared with us continues to resonate. He told the audience that he remembers sitting where we were sitting today...and with slight goose bumps, I realized that although there is much work to do, we should continue to improve, strive and further affect positive change."

~ Randa Kuziez
Faiths Act Fellow



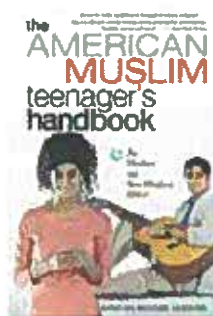
Secretary Clinton with Harvard historian, Dr. Precious Muhammad, who is creating a timeline of the history of Islam in America, at the State Department iftar.



Secretary Clinton with 17 year-old "Generation Changer," Mansoor Alam, Founder of Enough, a student-led group advocating for peace, progress and unity in the Middle East. Watch Mansoor Alam's speech at the De-radicalization Conference for the Pakistani American Community.

"Within 15 minutes, I found myself sitting next to people whose works I had read, poetry I had heard, and films I had seen...They had the power to facilitate change, the resources of youth and energy, and were finally given the opportunity for collaboration..."

~ Imran Hafiz, co-author of The American Muslim Teenager's Handbook



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Special guest speakers included Dr. Naif al-Mutawa, creator of "The 99," Senior Advisor in the Office of the Vice President, Herro Mustafa; and comedian Ahmed Ahmed.

See creators of the "New Muslim Cool," and Generation Change Special Guest Speakers and Members, Kauthar Umar and Hana Siddiqi's **PBS** blog about the event.

and hundreds of millions of people from other faiths and beliefs. So tonight, while we celebrate together, let us consider how we can build broader and deeper bonds of mutual understanding, mutual respect and cooperation among people of all faiths in the year to come, here at home and abroad. And let us also reflect on how we can improve our efforts to ensure that we create more opportunity for more people in more places to live up to their own God-given potential.

We sit down together for this meal on a day when the news is carrying reports that a pastor down in Gainesville, Florida plans to burn the Holy Qu'ran on September 11th. I am heartened by the clear, unequivocal condemnation of this disrespectful, disgraceful act that has come from American religious leaders of all faiths, from evangelical Christians to Jewish rabbis, as well as secular U.S. leaders and opinion-makers. Our commitment to religious tolerance goes back to the very beginning of our nation. Many of you know that in 1790, George Washington wrote to a synagogue in Newport, Rhode Island, that this country will give "to bigotry no sanction, to persecution no assistance."

The real story of Islam in America can be found in this room and rooms across America. We write it tonight, in the spirit of fellowship and the celebration of goodwill that is a hallmark of Ramadan. We will write it in the months and years to come, as we continue to reach out to engage people around the world in a search for common ground, common understanding, and common respect.

Just in the past week, we are reminded by the resumption of Middle East peace talks that progress always, always must be possible in spite of difficulty. And when there is a willingness to engage,

to convey respect to those of differing views, we can work toward reconciliation. In the end, I believe with all my heart that most people in the world are united by a shared desire for a peaceful future in which all our children, regardless of where they were born or how they worship, can have that opportunity to become all that they are meant to be in the name of the Almighty and in furtherance of our common humanity.

In the weeks and months ahead, President Obama and I will do everything we can to help advance the cause of a comprehensive peace, not only in the Middle East, but across the world, and inside the hearts and minds of our fellow Americans. In the Middle East, it is ultimately up to the people of the region to determine their own future.

As I said when I welcomed Israeli and Palestinian delegations, peace needs champions on every street corner and around every kitchen table, and not just there, but everywhere. So I hope that we at these tables and at similar tables everywhere where people are meeting in the spirit of Ramadan to break-fast, we will reflect on how we each can demonstrate that a different future is possible, a future built on the universal human values of mutual respect and inclusion.

Thank you.
Ramadan Kareem.

Watch "Generation Change" speaker, Ahmed Ahmed's, "Axis of Evil" Tour.



Ainee Fatima delivering her poem at Chicago's Louder than a Bomb Poetry Competition.



click!

- ▶ MBC Interview featuring Generation Change
- ▶ Secretary Clinton and Special Representative Pandith discuss Generation Change at State Department iftar
- ▶ Watch Generation Change Guest Speakers
- ▶ Generation Change Press Release



ABOVE RIGHT: Secretary Clinton with 18-year-old Ainee Fatima, "Generation Changer" and prize-winning poet.

ABOVE: Generation Change guests and diplomats mingle after the Secretary's iftar.

video

Anum Khan, Founder of "Spread the Peace," and Mousa Mosawy, Founder of "First Aid Link," discuss their experiences the Secretary's Iftar on **Odyssey Network**

Find out more about the Office of the Special Representative to Muslim Communities:
www.state.gov/s/srmc | Twitter: Farah_Pandith | Facebook: www.facebook.com/FPandith



Iftar

Germany: Iftar at Ambassador Murphy's Residence

On September 7, 2010, U.S. Ambassador to Germany Philip Murphy and Mrs. Murphy hosted an interfaith iftar. More than 90 distinguished guests from the Muslim, Christian, and Jewish communities attended the event, as did business, political, and community leaders involved in integration issues. "We are committed to learning and listening, to creating bridges of understanding and respect, and building stronger bonds of cooperation. We are working to ensure that our communication, our partnerships, and our policies reflect those core principles." Guests commented on the warm atmosphere at the Ambassador's Residence and the reception

provided an excellent networking opportunity. As a guest said: "This is quite an impressive audience. Some of the guests do not get along with each other; you invited them and they accepted and now they talk—this is true integration." This was the fifth consecutive year an iftar was organized by the U.S. Embassy in Berlin.



In Addis Ababa the Chargé participated in a Ramadan charitable event sponsored by a local women's organization at the Islamic Affairs Supreme Council of Ethiopia. The Public Affairs Section donated \$6,000 for school fees and iftar food supplies to orphans and other vulnerable children.

Denmark: Iftar at the Residence

Nearly 50 government officials, religious leaders, community leaders and NGO representatives attended an iftar hosted by Ambassador Fulton.



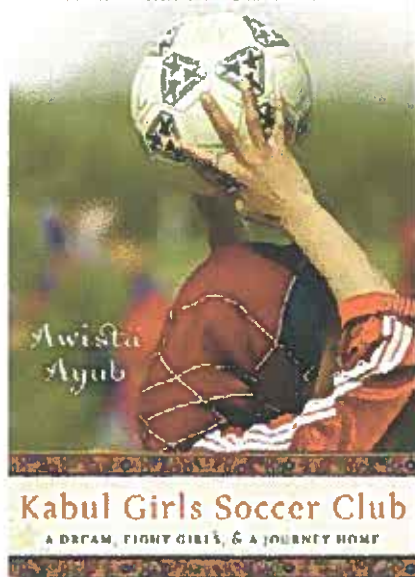
The Charge d'Affairs hosted a women's iftar for eight members of a Cameroonian women's group. The women discussed the role of faith in society, the perception of Islam in America, and the importance of women's organizations.



Ireland: Embassy Dublin Hosts Muslim Entrepreneurship Conference in Ireland

Embassy Dublin sponsored the first-ever "Muslim Entrepreneurship in Ireland" conference with the Dublin Institute of Technology (DIT). Attendees strategized on how to increase entrepreneurial activity within Muslim communities in Ireland and discussed how to run a business in an environment without sharia-compliant banking.

"This book is a testament to the power of hope"
— KHALED HOSEINI, bestselling author of *The Kite Runner*



In a recent letter to our office, Awista Ayub, author of Kabul Girls Soccer Club, calls Generation Changers to Action:

On, September 7, 2010, I had the unique opportunity to attend both the iftar hosted by Secretary Clinton, as well as the Generation Change meeting hosted by Farah Pandith, Special Representative to Muslim Communities. While I have been involved with issues related to Afghan girls and sports since 2004, this meeting was the first time I have been surrounded by, and interacted with, so many accomplished young Muslim Americans from throughout the country and from various ethnic backgrounds.

As I sat alongside such an accomplished group, I could not help but wonder why the U.S. media is not reaching out to more of us to speak about our own individual and collective efforts toward helping to shape the dialogue surrounding Islam today, both here and abroad. While many of us have long become representatives for our faith, voluntary or not, now is the time that we should be called upon in a concerted effort to speak up as Muslims about what it means to live our hyphenated identity as Muslim Americans, and further, to share stories about how we are contributing in positive ways toward changing the social fabric of that identity. Too often, non-Muslims speak for us in the mainstream media, and what I know for sure is this: we can speak for ourselves. We, collectively, are a group of vibrant and driven individuals representing various cultures and programs and should be utilized to help drive our own narrative.

Where I think this network has the greatest potential to create impact driven change is how the U.S. Department of State now utilizes us to identify issues specific to our communities, as well as to determine promising solutions to address those issues. I hope that we become a valued and vital resource for future programs within the U.S. Department of State, and elsewhere, as we seek to address the challenging issues that we face today. Now is the time to let us speak on our own behalf.

Awista Ayub is the author of Kabul Girls Soccer Club (formerly However Tall the Mountain), and has previously worked as the Education and Health Officer with the Embassy of Afghanistan in Washington, D.C. Awista has been featured on ABC News (Person of Week), Glamour Magazine, ESPN and CNN. Log onto www.awistaayub.com for more information about her work. Become a fan on facebook.

Find out more about the Office of the Special Representative to Muslim Communities:
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